



## *Cotton/Soybean Insect Newsletter*

Volume 15, Issue #16

Edisto Research & Education Center in Blackville, SC

21 August 2020

### **Pest Patrol Alerts**

The information contained herein each issue is available via text alerts that direct users to online recordings. I will update the short message often for at least as long as the newsletter runs. After a new message is posted, a text message is sent to alert users that I have recorded a new update. Users can subscribe for text message alerts for my updates in two easy steps. Step one: register by texting **pestpat7** to 97063. Step two: reply to the confirmation text you receive by texting the letter "y" to complete your registration. Pest Patrol Alerts are sponsored by Syngenta.

### **Updates on Twitter**

When noteworthy events happen in the field, I will be sending them out quickly via Twitter. If you want to follow those quick updates, follow me at [@bugdocisin](https://twitter.com/bugdocisin) on Twitter.



### **News from Around the State**

**Jonathan Croft**, county agent in Orangeburg County, reported that "cotton around the 7<sup>th</sup> week of bloom I checked this week in Orangeburg and Dorchester Counties was above threshold for stink bug injury. I also got some reports of bollworms/eggs in cotton in the area. I didn't see many in fields I checked. Soybeans are about the same as last week. Still a mix of worms and a few green stink bugs. Fields I checked were still below threshold." I also interacted again this week with **Drake Perrow** and **Fleming McMaster**, crop consultants in SC, and Drake sent the photo here of a brown stink bug hiding under a boll bract. Fleming sent the shot of the hornet nest on the edge of a cotton field. Watch out! Send me your reports for this section!



### **Upcoming Virtual Field Days**

Clemson University will be offering a handful of virtual field days this fall. Tentatively, the Edisto REC field day will go live on 10 September, but it should remain up for some time to allow folks to participate when they can. We are working on ways to provide certification credits for watching segments. Here are links to more details about proposed times for all field days:

<https://agfax.com/2020/08/19/clemson-fall-field-days-will-be-online-this-year/>  
<https://www.clemson.edu/cafls/research/fieldday/>

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## Cotton Situation

As of 16 August 2020, the USDA NASS South Carolina Statistical Office estimated that about 90% of the crop is squaring, compared with 87% at this time last week, 100% at this time last year, and 98% for the 5-year average. About 75% of the crop is setting bolls, compared with 65% at this time last week, 94% at this time last year, and 87% for the 5-year average. The condition of the crop was described as 15% excellent, 53% good, 17% fair, 9% poor, and 6% very poor. These are observed/perceived state-wide averages.

## Cotton Insects

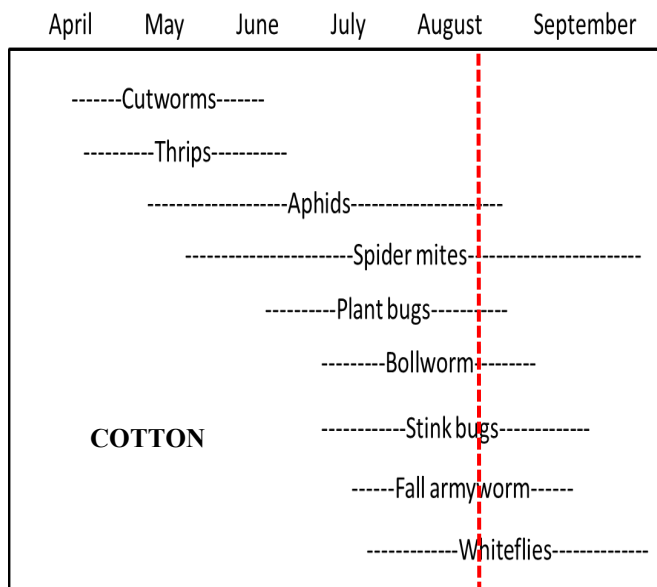
Essentially, the report this week is a repeat of last week. Captures of bollworm moths in pheromone traps increased again, and numbers this past week were higher than they have been in the last several years. I hate being correct about this, but I have stated for the last couple of weeks the rains would wet the soil and likely release numerous moths from their pupal cells underground. That prediction continues to come true, and, as the rains continue, I expect the flight to continue.



Again, keep a watchful eye on 2-gene Bt cotton, especially any that was planted late. The technology seems to be holding up this

season, but we have observed square and boll damage over threshold in 2-gene Bt cotton this year. Egg counts for bollworm were up this week (photo here), exceeding 20% eggs and triggering some applications in research plots. We will likely see more injury next week.

The crop is moving along quickly, as is “stink bug month”! Boll damage from stink bugs hasn’t been crazy so far this year, but we still have a few weeks to be largely in the clear. Any cotton planted late will be a bottleneck for stink bugs, so check those fields closely. There were a ton of stink bugs in soybeans this week, so they are out there in force. Stink bugs should be the main focus of insect management efforts in cotton now and into September. Our recommendations for controlling stink bugs are included in the 2020 Pest Management Handbook and in previous issues of this newsletter.



(<https://www.clemson.edu/extension/agronomy/pest%20management%20handbook.html>)

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### Soybean Situation

As of 16 August 2020, the USDA NASS South Carolina Statistical Office estimated that about 68% of the crop is blooming, compared with 57% the previous week, 77% at this time last year, and 74% for the 5-year average. About 37% of the crop is setting pods, compared with 25% the previous week, 28% at this time last year, and 31% for the 5-year average. The condition of the crop was described as 23% excellent, 53% good, 12% fair, 6% poor, and 6% very poor. These are observed/perceived state-wide averages.

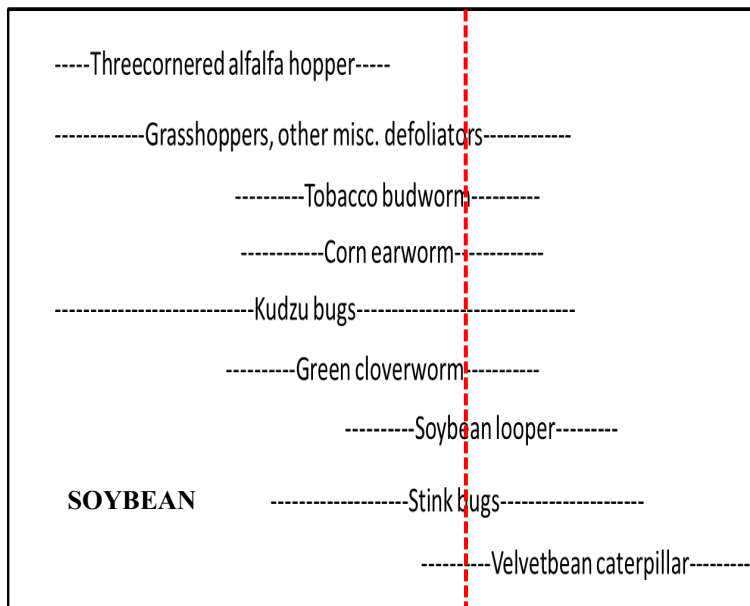
### Soybean Insects

Defoliation continues to increase as populations of soybean looper (SBL) increase. Other species, such as green cloverworm (GCW), are in the mix, but SBL is predominant now. Read last week's newsletter for a refresher on how and why you should be able to identify and distinguish between very small GCW and SBL larvae. Hopefully, we don't see large migratory populations of velvetbean caterpillar (VBC) like we did last year. Remember those rare insecticide-resistant VBC from last year? Continue to watch this complex of defoliating caterpillars, and don't let defoliation exceed 15% once pods are filling. Estimate defoliation

at least weekly. Use a sweep net or a drop cloth to

make counts of insects to see what species you have, as insecticide choice depend on proper identification of species. Podworm (same as bollworm) was abundant in soybeans again this week, so they might also be a factor next week feeding on pods. Also, as pods develop, stink bugs should be the focus of insect control in soybeans. They are our number one insect pest group of soybeans in the state. Redbanded stink bugs are in the mix again this season, so tank mixes might be needed for this hard-to-control species.

April May June July August September October



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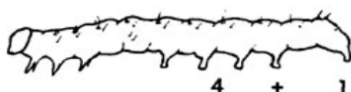
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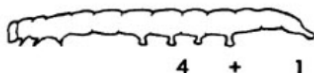
Be able to recognize larvae and moths! Use the chart here for identifying adults and larvae.



## FIELD KEY TO COMMON SOYBEAN CATERpillARS



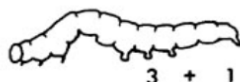
**CORN EARWORM**  
4 + 1 pair prolegs  
Curls up in hand  
Black "warts" on body



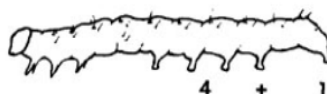
**VELVETBEAN CATERPILLAR**  
4 + 1 pair prolegs  
Very active when handled



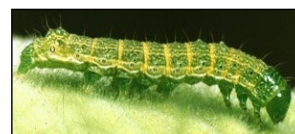
**SOYBEAN LOOPER**  
2 + 1 pair prolegs  
Fatter at tail end  
Looping movement



**GREEN CLOVERWORM**  
3 + 1 pair prolegs  
Not fatter at tail end  
Looping movement



**TOBACCO BUDWORM**  
4 + 1 pair prolegs  
Curls up in hand  
Black "warts" on body



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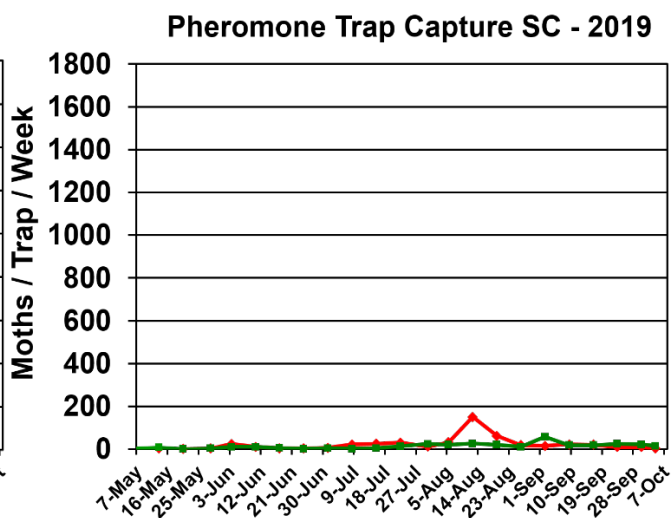
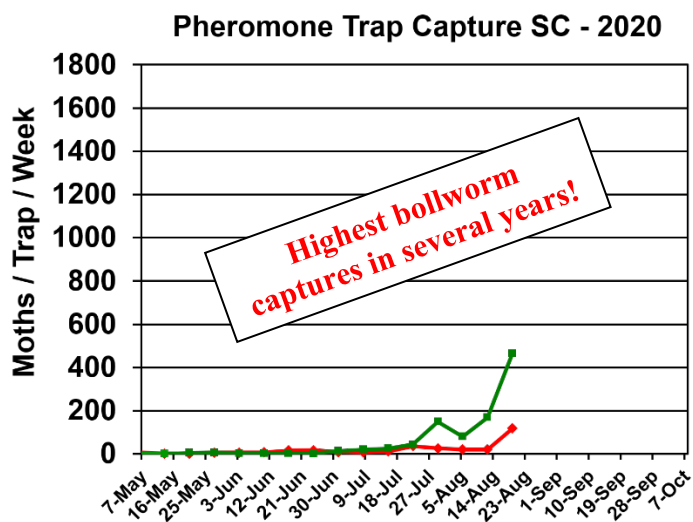
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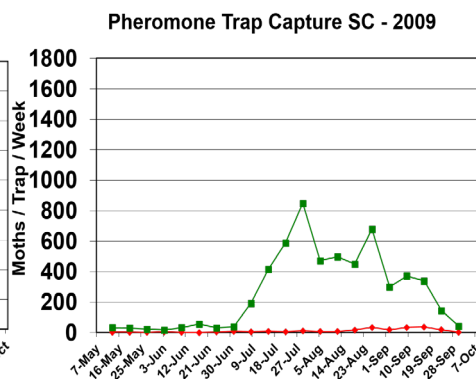
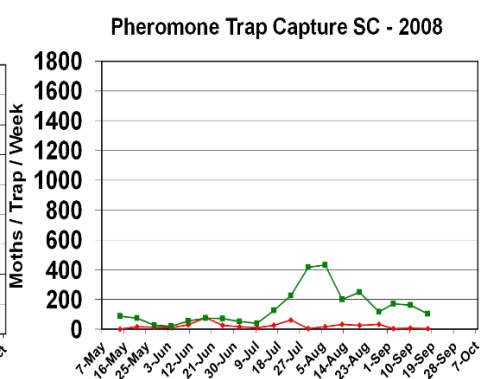
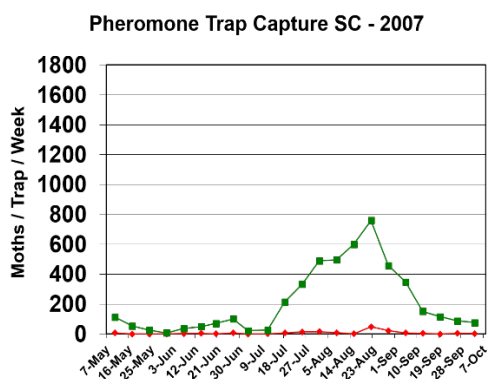
### Bollworm & Tobacco Budworm



Captures of bollworm (BW) and tobacco budworm (TBW) moths in pheromone traps at EREC this season are shown below, as are the captures from 2007-2019 for reference. Tobacco budworm continues to be important for our soybean acres and for any acres of non-Bt cotton. I provide these data as a measure of moth presence and activity in our local area near my research plots. The numbers are not necessarily representative of the species throughout the state.



Trap data from 2007-2018 are shown below for reference to other years of trapping data from EREC:

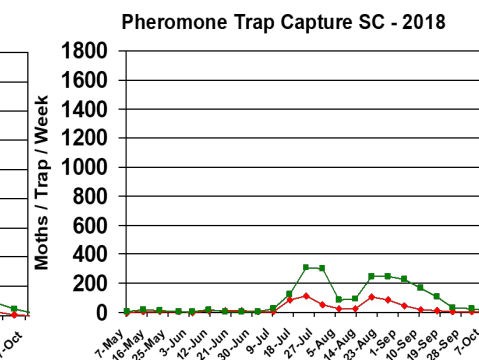
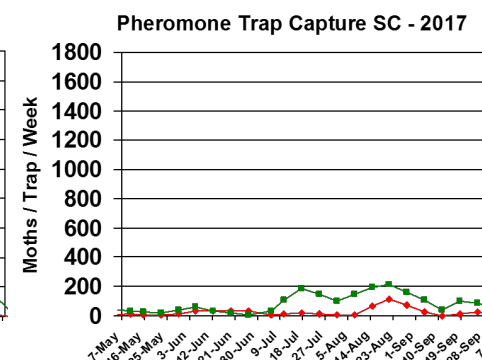
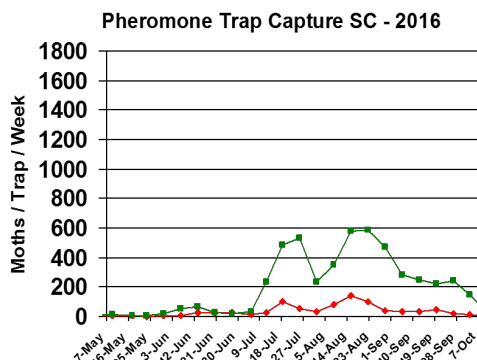
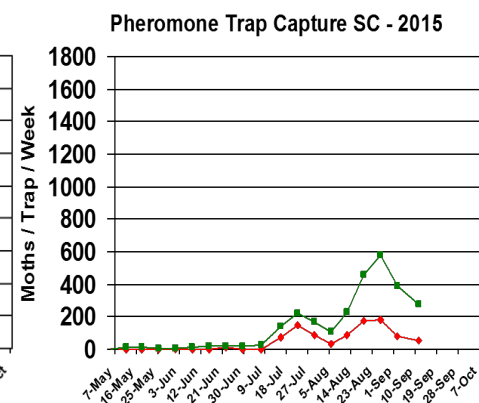
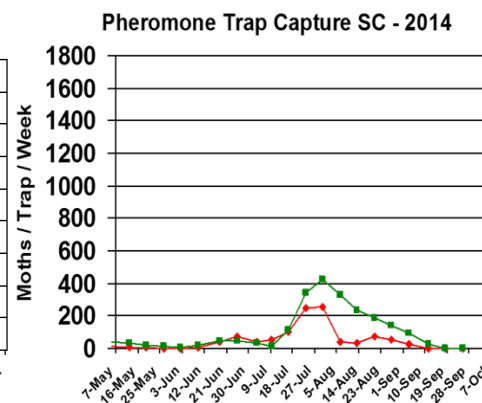
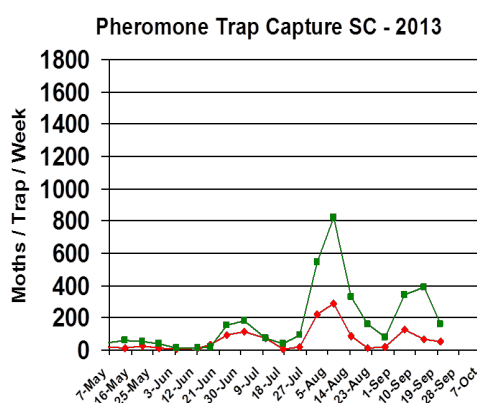
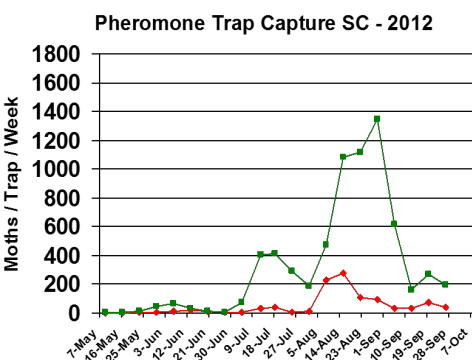
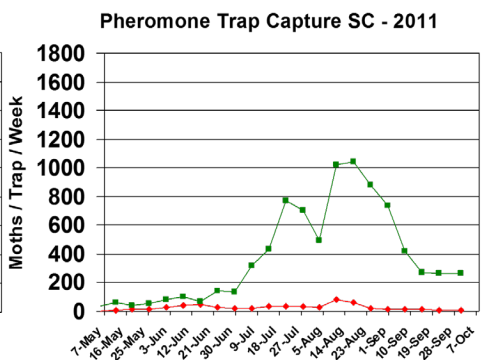
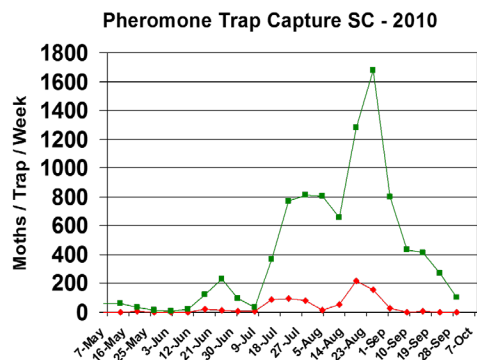


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## **Pest Management Handbook – 2020**

Insect control recommendations are available online in the 2020 South Carolina Pest Management Handbook at:

<https://www.clemson.edu/extension/agronomy/pest%20management%20handbook.html>

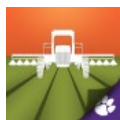
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For historical cotton/soybean insect newsletters:

<https://www.clemson.edu/extension/agronomy/cotton1/newsletters.html>

Sincerely,

Jeremy K. Greene, Ph.D.  
Professor of Entomology



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